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Istook Votes to Free Education From Federal Control

Washington, D.C. -- Congressman Ernest Istook (R-OK) today voted for a bill to free Oklahoma and other states from federal regulation accompanying federal education dollars. H.R. 2300, the Academic Achievement for All Act or "Straight A's" extends to all states the flexibility currently enjoyed by twelve states under the Ed-Flex program.

The "Ed-Flex" program waives most regulations accompanying federal education funding for public schools in exchange for higher accountability.

"This bill allows teachers and school districts to focus on helping students learn instead of meeting arbitrary federal guidelines," said Istook. **"Instead of burdening schools with mountains of paperwork, we're telling them, 'Do what you think is best, and as long as you have good results, we'll keep funding your efforts.'"**

The Ed-Flex program was first authorized in 1992 and given a test-run as a demonstration project in 12 states. This bill expands the program to all 50 states, including Oklahoma. In exchange for increased accountability, Ed-Flex provides greater state and local flexibility in using federal education funds to support locally-designed, comprehensive school improvement efforts.

"True education reform begins with less federal control, not more," said Istook. **"Washington bureaucrats don't know best how to educate our kids. This bill provides needed resources while freeing schools from red tape to once more improve academics and discipline as they see fit."**

Straight A's dramatically reduces the influence of the Federal Department of Education in State and local school district matters and rewards schools with additional funds if they improve the test scores of the lowest achieving children by more than 25%.

"We need accountability in education, not bureaucracy."